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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Landmark/District:	<b>Georgetown Historic District</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>1328-1336 Wisconsin Avenue, NW</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent
Meeting Date:	<b>July 28, 2011</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New construction
Case Number:	<b>11-373</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additions
		<input type="checkbox"/> Alterations
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Tim Dennée</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept

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The applicant, Robert Bell, agent and architect for the owners of the multiple properties—1328-1330 Wisconsin Avenue LLC and Soleiman Brothers V LLC—requests the Board’s conceptual review of a proposal to construct one-story-and-basement additions at the rear of each of three two-story, brick, “contributing” buildings, two dating to the early 1890s, and one to the mid 1920s.<sup>1</sup>

The case has been referred to the Board as outside the jurisdiction of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, because the projects would not be visible from a public way. In fact, the rear-yard site is unusual both for its triangular shape due to the northwestward alignment of Wisconsin Avenue and for the fact that it is bounded by and sunken relative to the parking deck of the Georgetown Inn, immediately to the west.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the finished additions would stand only a half-story above the cars on the concrete deck. The project thus proposes to make use of sunken spaces that presently have no exterior access and are now used for outdoor storage if anything at all.

Because of the oblique angle of the rear property line, the additions would vary in depth from as much as 22 feet to as little as five. They would extend from side lot line to side lot line. For commercial uses, occupancy of all the lot area is permitted by the zoning regulations.

This case appears to be as much a proposal to the property owners as to the Board, so for the purpose of conceptual review, the drawings lack both interior plans and exterior elevations for the additions. As each addition would be separated from the next by a masonry firewall, brick is a logical exterior material, as well as the most appropriate to the subject buildings, but the use of a fiber-cement siding would be sufficiently compatible in this context. The roofs would be nearly flat, most penetrated by skylights.

The details of the exteriors can be addressed by staff as the individual projects proceed. In addition, while the level of demolition is fairly limited—the removal of the rear wall and the first and basement levels in all cases—each of the projects will be reviewed at the permit level to see

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<sup>1</sup> The building at 1332-1336 Wisconsin is divided into two ground-floor retail spaces and has commercial space above. The application actually does not make clear that the applicant is representing the owner of this building.

<sup>2</sup> The hotel itself stands to the south of the subject properties.

whether even that much is necessary. Many small additions do not add the space of an entire room behind an existing building and, thus, the rear wall must be removed to create a usable space. On the other hand, many additions do add at least a room depth, and existing walls may be retained except to the degree that they may impede passage between the old and new spaces. Of course, with the angle of the rear property line, the additions grow increasingly shallower toward the north, suggesting that at least the smallest, five-foot-deep addition at 1336 Wisconsin may not justify, in the value of its additional volume, the cost of demolition and reconstruction.

The staff recommends that the Board approve the projects in concept and delegate to staff the review of further design development.